

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

December 12, 2018

Mr. Daniel K. Elwell
Acting Administrator
Federal Aviation Administration
10th Floor
800 Independence Ave. SW
Washington, DC 20591

Dear Acting Administrator Elwell:

The *FAA Reauthorization Act of 2018* recently signed into law contains many important provisions that support the contract tower program, which has been in place for over 30 years. The contract tower program enjoys widespread support in the Congress. In addition to the safety and financial benefits, the program plays a key role in connecting rural communities to the national air transportation system. The program also promotes economic development and job creation by helping airports retain and develop commercial air service. Contract towers also provides significant support for military readiness and training as well as for disaster relief, homeland security, and law enforcement operations.

Currently, there are 256 airports in 46 states that participate in this program. The program consistently receives high marks for customer service from aviation users including pilots, airlines, fixed-base operators, flight schools, and corporate flight departments. Without the contract tower program, people living and traveling to our small communities and rural areas would be without the important safety benefits that air traffic control provides.

Not only do these contract towers provide an important safety service, but they do so in a very cost-effective manner. This is demonstrated by the fact that contract towers handle approximately 29% of all U.S. air traffic control tower operations, but account for only 11% of the FAA's overall budget allotted to such operations. This means that the contract tower program saves the FAA and taxpayers approximately \$200 million per year and \$2 billion over 10 years.

The *FAA Reauthorization Act of 2018* makes many important improvements to the contract tower program. As the FAA begins the process of making associated policy changes necessary to implement the law, we would like to express our support for Section 152, which authorizes the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to provide Airport Improvement Program (AIP) grants from the small airport fund to an airport participating in the contract tower program for the purpose of constructing an air traffic control tower and for the acquisition and installation of related equipment. We respectfully urge the FAA to follow the statute when implementing this important provision that will enhance air traffic safety at smaller and rural airports throughout the country.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter. We look forward to working with you to maintain an efficient air traffic system and keep passengers safe.

Sincerely,



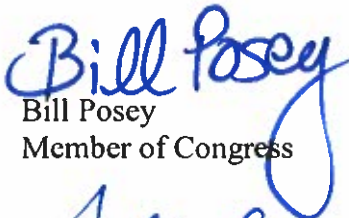
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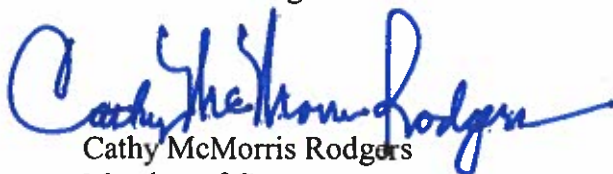
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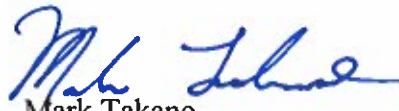
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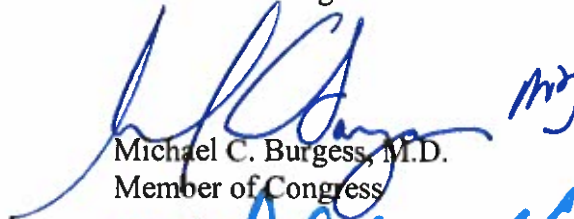
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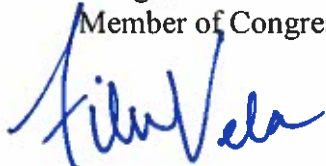
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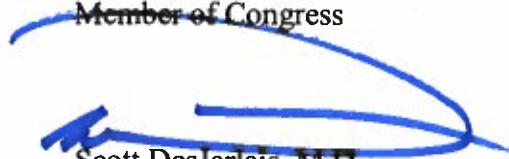
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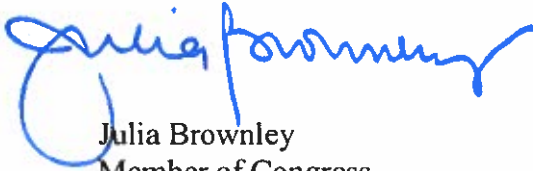
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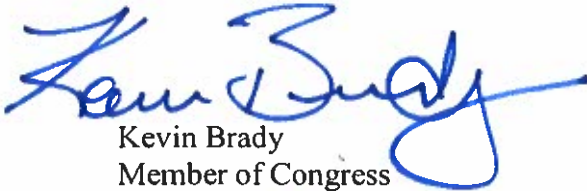
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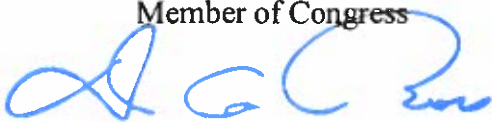
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